



Trash Timeline

Activity P.ee & E.ee

GRADE LEVEL: K-3, 4&5

OBJECTIVE: To emphasize the importance of disposing trash appropriately and recycling materials.

MATERIALS:

- Trash Timeline illustration
- Signs for each of the following:
 - o Newspaper
 - o Cigarette Butt
 - o Aluminum Can
 - o Glass Bottle
 - o Hard Plastic Container
 - o Banana Peel
 - o Disposable Diaper
 - o Wool Cap
 - o Rubber Sole
 - o Tin Can
 - o Six Pack Rings
 - o 2-4 weeks
 - o 3-5 weeks
 - o 1 year
 - o 2-5 years
 - o 10- 20 years
 - o 20-30 years
 - o 50-80 years
 - o 80-100 years
 - o 200-400 years
 - o 450 years
 - o Forever

VOCABULARY: decomposition

PROCEDURE:

- Begin the activity with a discussion of problems associated with litter. Explain the objective of the lesson to the students.
- Give each student one of the signs. Ask the students with signs displaying **decomposition** times to tape them to the board in chronological order. Then have the students with trash signs to go to the board and arrange the signs in order from fastest to decompose to slowest. (Students can tape the garbage signs under the decomposition time signs, or set them in the chalk tray to make it easier to change the order of the signs)
- Ask:
 1. Which items will break down quickly?
 2. Which items will take a long time to decompose?
- Allow students to make suggestions and have the volunteers switch the garbage sign positions as directed by their peers.
- Have the students continue putting the items in order until the class is satisfied with the results.

· Go over the approximate times that are listed on the TNSWEP Trash Timeline with the students. Try to relate these times to the students lives so they can better understand how long the decomposition process takes. For example: If the students were 15 years old, explain to them that if they left a plastic Tupperware outside today, they would be as old, or older than their parents by the time it decomposes!

NOTE: Decomposition rates vary due to differences in the environment in which the material is located. For example, a desert with out water is an environment in which garbage would decompose slower than in a humid environment. Items in a landfill do not decompose readily with out water and oxygen.

· Ask:

1. Which of these items listed in the trash timeline should be recycled?
(newspaper, plastic bowl, tin can, aluminum can, plastic six pack rings, glass bottle)
2. What could be done with the other items instead of throwing them away? (The banana peel could be composted, the wool cap could be donated to charity, if the shoes were in good shape they could be donated as well)